**Eng 386 A01: Victorian Poetry**

**Dr Alison Chapman**

Office: D2368

E-Mail: [alisonc@uvic.ca](mailto:alisonc@uvic.ca)

Office Tel: 853-4731

(email often reaches me quicker)

Office Hours: Wed. 1-2pm

Seminar Room: Cle A315

Seminar Times: Mon, Wed, Thurs 3.30-4.20pm



# Course Objectives

* To introduce you to or deepen your knowledge of Victorian poetry and Victorian culture
* To improve your skills at poetic analysis and academic essay writing
* To improve your skills at digital learning, communication and publication
* To give you confidence at speaking in seminars
* To improve your research and library skills

# Course Outline

This course will examine a wide range of Victorian poetry, both canonical and non-canonical. We will explore the poetry in terms of its formal innovations, through close reading and a study of Victorian poetic theory, as well as the Victorian social, political and cultural contexts in which the poetry was produced.

## Course Text

Thomas J. Collins and Vivienne J. Rundle (eds.), *The Broadview Anthology of Victorian Poetry and Poetic Theory* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 1999)

N.B.: Some additional texts are available from the database *Literature Online* (LION), available through the Library Gateway webpage.

## Seminar format

Classes will involve a mixture of lectures and discussion. I expect all students to attend the seminars fully prepared to engage with the material.

# Assessment (see also below)

* **Participation** 10%
* **In-class close reading** 2 x 5%
* **Research Portfolio** 50% (15% wiki entry; 35% research essay)
* **Exam** 30% (details to follow)

# Essay Format

Please prepare and submit your essay as follows:

* No duotangs or covers
* Single-sided pages, stapled at left corner
* Double spacing, 1” margins, 12 point font
* All pages numbered
* Title page with original title, your name, course and section number, and total word count
* Use MLA citation style with works cited
* Keep a copy in case your paper is lost
* NB: Essays will be graded on organisation, grammar, spelling, and quality of writing, as well as logic, presentation, argument, and quality of literary analysis
* **Grading**
* A reminder of UVic grading policy:

**A+ 90-100%; A 85-89%; A- 80-84%:** Exceptional, outstanding and excellent performance. Normally achieved by a minority of students. These grades indicate a student who is self-initiating, exceeds expectation and has an insightful grasp of the subject matter.

**B+ 75-79%; B 70-74%; B- 65-69%:** Very good, good and solid performance. Normally achieved by the largest number of students. These grades indicate a good grasp of the subject matter or excellent grasp in one area balanced with satisfactory grasp in the other area.

* **C+ 60-64%; C 55-59%:** Satisfactory or minimally satisfactory. These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject area.

**D 50-54%:** Marginal Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.

**F 0-49%:** Unsatisfactory performance. Wrote final examination and completed course requirements; no supplemental.

**N:** Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental.

* Please read the policy on **plagiarism** and cheating in the University Calendar. Any proven plagiarism or cheating will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. If you are unclear on the relation between paraphrase and plagiarism, please see me before submitting a paper.

**“N” Grade:** Students who have completed ALL the assignments will be considered to have completed the course and will be assigned a final grade. Failure to complete one or more of these elements will result in a grade of “N” regardless of the cumulative percentage on other elements of the course. An “N” is a failing grade, and it factors into a student’s GPA as O. The maximum percentage that can accompany an N on a student's transcript is 49.

* **The exam** will not be rescheduled, so please book airline flights and plan any holidays, etc. accordingly.
* **Feedback** As well as individual feedback on assignments, I will also give regular in-class feedback (although I will not identify authors of papers in class).
* **Late or incomplete assignments** Portfolio components must be submitted before the beginning of class on the due date, so I can give prompt in-class responses. I will not re-schedule in-class close reading assignments except in extreme circumstances, because it would not be fair on other students to let you write the assignment after benefiting from my feedback. In the case of research essays, late submissions will be penalised by 5% on the first day and 1% for each day thereafter (including weekends). If you have a medical or other emergency that prevents you from submitting the essay on the due date, please get in touch with me as soon as possible to discuss the possibility of an extension.

**Office hours** Please come and see me during my office hour, or at another time by appointment, to discuss your interests, questions and concerns. Feel free also to contact me by phone or email (but *for emails please be sure to include “Engl 386” as the subject heading*).

# Class Participation An objective of this course is to encourage you to develop your skills in communicating your ideas effectively in both writing and speech. Class participation will be evaluated as follows:

* Did you attend class regularly?
* Had you read the assigned texts?
* Did you arrive with questions about and responses to your reading?
* Did you respond to or engage with other students in class discussion?
* Did other students and/or the professor learn from your contributions?
* Did you make regular, brief, constructive and thoughful comments on the course blog?

**Accommodations** If you have any speech or hearing impediment or difficulty that affects this or any other aspect of your assessment, please do see me as soon as possible to discuss how this can be accommodated.

# Resources

# Internet

# You may find some of the following resource sources on the web helpful:

*BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth Century History* [*http://www.branchcollective.org/*](http://www.branchcollective.org/)

*The Victorian Web* <http://www.victorianweb.org/>

## *Victorian Poetry Network* <http://victorianpoetry.net>

## *The Victoria Research Web* <http://victorianresearch.org/>

# Encyclopaedias

The following resources are in the reserve section of the McPherson Library and should be your first port of call when preparing for a research essay:

James Eli Adams. *Encyclopedia of the Victorian Era*. 4 vols. Grolier, 2004.

Sally Mitchell. *Victorian Britain. An Encyclopedia*. Garland, 1998.

# Secondary Material in Print

I have placed the following books on reserve at the McPherson Library.

* Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics and Politics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993)
* Joseph Bristow, *Cambridge Companion to Victorian Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)
* Alison Chapman (ed.), *Victorian Women Poets* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2003)

Richard Cronin, Alison Chapman and Antony H. Harrison (eds.), *A Companion to Victorian Poetry* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002)

Linda K. Hughes, *The Cambridge Introduction to Victorian Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

Angela Leighton, *Victorian Women Poets: A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996)

Herbert Tucker, ed. *A Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999)

**THE COURSE BLOG CAN BE FOUND AT**

[**http://engl386.wordpress.com/**](http://engl386.wordpress.com/)

**PLEASE CHECK THE WEBSITE FREQUENTLY FOR IMPORTANT NEWS, INFORMATION**

**AND RESOURCES!**

**YOU HAVE TO REGISTER WITH THE BLOG TO COMMENT!**

#### Schedule

5 September **Introduction** to course and to each other

6 September **What makes Victorian poetry “Victorian”?** How to read a Victorian poem?

10 September **Poetry of Sensation**

Tennyson, “Mariana”

Hallam, “On Some of the Characteristics of Modern Poetry”

12 September **Radical poetry**

Browning, “Porphyria’s Lover”

John Stuart Mill, “What is Poetry?”

13 September **The Poetess**

Hemans, “The Grave of a Poetess”; Letitia Elizabeth Landon, “Felicia Hemans”

*The Poetess Archive*: <http://unixgen.muohio.edu/~poetess/index.html>

*Forget Me Not: A Hyper-Textual Archive*

<http://www.orgs.muohio.edu/anthologies/FMN/>

17 September **Library tour** and introduction to Victorian library resources

Please meet inside the library foyer

19 September **Victorian poetry in literary annuals and periodicals (1)**

NB: Please meet in the Special Collections classroom (A003)

20 September **The Pre-Raphaelites**

Christina Rossetti, “A Birthday”; Dante Gabriel Rossetti, “The Blessed Damozel” Elizabeth Siddal, “The Lust of the Eyes”

24 September **What makes a good poetry close reading?**

26 September **Lyric**

Tennyson, “Break, break, break”; Christina Rossetti, “Song”

27 September **In-class close reading 1**

1 October **The Brontës**

Charlotte Brontë, “On the Death of Emily Jane Brontë”, “Reason”; Emily Brontë, “‘No coward soul is mine’”, “‘The night is darkening round me’”; Anne Brontë, “Dreams”

3 October **The dramatic monologue**

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, “Jenny”; Augusta Webster, “A Castaway”

4 October **Working-class poetry**

William Barnes, “Childhood”; Eliza Cook, “The Old Arm-Chair”

8 October **Thanksgiving: No class**

10 October **Illustrated poetry (class held in Special Collections classroom A003)**

Christina Rossetti, “Goblin Market”

11 October **Post-Romanticism (1)**

Hemans, “To Wordsworth”;Arnold, “Memorial Verses”

15 October **Post-Romanticism (2)**

Hardy, “The Darkling Thrush”

17 October **Elegy**

**Tennyson, *In Memoriam***

18 October  **In-class** **Close reading (2)**

22 October  **The sonnet craze (1)**

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Sonnets from the Portuguese*

24 October  **The sonnet craze (2)**

Christina Rossetti, *Monna Innominata*; George Meredith, *Modern Love*

**Wiki entries and research essay propodals emailed before in class**

25 October **Homage poems**

Dora Greenwell, “To Elizabeth Barrett Browning in 1851”; Sydney Dobell, “To the Authoress of ‘Aurora Leigh’”

29 October **History (1)**

Robert Browning, “A Toccata of Galuppi’s”

31 October **History (2)**

Arnold, “Dover Beach”

1 November **Victorian poetry in literary annuals and periodicals (2)**

Barrett Browning, “Lord Walter’s Wife”, “Little Mattie” [LION]

5 November **The “Fleshly School”**

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, “Nuptial Sleep”

Robert Buchanan, “The Fleshly School of Poetry”; Dante Gabriel Rossetti, “The Stealthy School of Criticism”

7 November **Mirror Poems (1)**

Tennyson, “The Lady of Shalott”; Webster, “By the Looking-Glass” [LION]

8 November **Mirror poems (2)**

Mary Coleridge, “The Other Side of A Mirror”

12 November **Remembrance Day: No class**

14 November **Reading Break: No class**

15 November **Research essays due in class**

**Nonsense**

Lear, “The Owl and the Pussycat”

19 November **Sexualities (1)**

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, “Nuptial Sleep”; Munby, “The Serving Maid”

21 November **Sexualities (2)**

Michael Field, “It was deep April, and the morn”

22 November **Sacramental poetry (1)**

Christina Rossetti, “Uphill”

26 November **Sacramental poetry (2)**

Hopkins, “God’s Grandeur”

28 November **Aestheticism, Decadence and the 1890s (1)**

Field, “Cyclamens”; Levy, “A London Plane Tree”;

Pater, “Preface” to *The Renaissance*

29 November **Aestheticism, Decadence and the 1890s (2)**

Dowson, “Villanelle of Sunset”; Johnson, “Bagley Wood”

3 December **Course review and exam preparation**

**SUMMATIVE INFORMATION ON ASSIGNMENTS (more to follow)**

***\*\*\* IF ANYTHING IS UNCLEAR, PLEASE ASK ME! \*\*\****

**In-Class** **Close Reading**

**Value: 2 x 5%**

**Date: 27 September & 18 October**

* The reading will be based on a poem from the anthology, but not one we have previously discussed
* This is a “low stakes” assignment to help you improve your analytical skills with poetry
* Help will be given with close reading in class beforehand, but remember to pay attention not only to WHAT the poem says, but to HOW it says it. Readings that engage with the poem’s formal devices (such as imagery, language, metaphor, verse form) will be highly rewarded.
* Responses to the first close reading will help you improve for the second assignment and hopefully achieve a higher mark. Close readings may be made anonymous and discussed in class.
* All subsequent assignments will involve an element of close reading, so giving you a chance to work on your analytical skills will help your understanding of the poetry and your overall grade

**Research Portfolio**

1. **Wiki Entry**

**Value: 15%**

**Due: Before the class on 24 October by email to** [**alisonc@uvic.ca**](mailto:alisonc@uvic.ca)

**Word Length: 750-1000 words**

* The wiki entry will be based on the topic of your research essay, and if attaining a suitable standard will be published online (attributed by your intitials) here: <http://victorianpoetrypoeticsandcontext.wikispaces.com/>
* Some examples: (1) if your research essay is on the sonnet craze, the associated wiki entry could be on Elizabeth Barrett Browning, or the sonnet sequence genre, or a specific sonnet sequence, or on the Petrarchan ideology; (2) if your research essay is on the representation of nature in religious poetry, the wiki entry could be on Hopkins’ sacramentalism, or Tractarian poetry, or religious contexts to the Victorian age; (3) if your research essay is on the Pre-Raphaelites, your wiki entry could be on the formation of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, or the publication history of key Pre-Raphaelite poem (such as Christina Rossetti’s “Goblin Market”) or picture (such as Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s “The Girlhood of the Virgin Mary”) or Lizzie Siddal’s biography/mythology
* Think of wiki entries as encylopedic entries, summarising knowledge and sources, like wikipedia, and based on synthesising solid sources (rather than interpretation)
* Think of wiki entries as part of the process of work for a research essay
* For examples of successful wiki entries, published from the last English 386 course, see <http://web.uvic.ca/~vicpoet/wiki/>

1. **Research Essay**

**Value: 35%**

**Proposals Due: 24 October by email (i.e. with the wiki entry)**

**Essays Due: 15 November, paper copy (in class)**

**Length: 10-12pp. excluding notes and bibliography**

* You may write your essay on **any aspect** of the course as it pertains to one or more texts on the course syllabus. You should invent your own title and submit to me a proposal for the essay on or before the deadline above, in order to receive timely feedback and suggestions for further reading. **I will only accept essays that have had a proposal sent beforehand.**
* Think of the wiki entry as **preparation for the research**.
* You may choose to base your essay topic on any of the topics in the course. **The only stipulation is that you write different poems from the close readings**. If you need help in choosing an essay topic, I will be very happy to give you ideas. Please talk to me before the proposal deadline. The library tour and the classes in Special Collections will equip you with important skills for library research; I will also provide a handout in class with key tools resources and reference materials to help you research the Victorian period.
* **The research component of the assignment requires you to**: (1) situate the text(s) you choose in relation to the broader social context of your topic; and (2) to include in your paper a discussion of the Victorian debate about poetics and the literariness of poetry

The extent of this discussion of poetics is up to you; it may be a brief section or introductory preamble to your paper, or it may constitute a larger portion of your paper. For example, if you choose to write on Tennyson’s poetry, you may want to examine the extent to which it engages with the Victorian debate about poetry’s relation to modernity, in Hallam’s review (in the *Broadview Anthology*) and in other periodical essays in the library, also drawing on Tennyson’s own comments on poetry. Another example: if you choose to write on Hopkins and religion, you may want to address the significance of his “invention” of sprung rhythm, drawing on his own writing on poetics (in the *Broadview Anthology*) and wider Victorian concerns with metre. If you decide to write on the “Poetess”, you may opt to examine the construction of the woman poet and the gendered expectations of her writing in reviews, in prefaces to poetry, and in literaey annual.

*Please note that the course schedule may change due to unforeseen circumstances.***English 386: Victorian Poetry Dr Alison Chapman**

## Research Essay Proposal

**Due: 18 October 2012 before class by email to** [**alisonc@uvic.ca**](mailto:alisonc@uvic.ca)

**Name**:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**E-Mail address**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Your proposed topic:**

(Please describe your proposed topic and the poems you plan to write on. Your proposal can be as short as a sentence or as long as a paragraph)

**My comments and research suggestions:**